

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/506,671
Amendment filed July 11, 2008
Reply to OA dated April 17, 2008

REMARKS:

Claims 1-6, 8-15, and 19-22 are currently being examined. Claims 1-3 and 14 have been amended herein. Claims 19-22 have been newly added herein. Claims 16-18 have been canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer as to their subject matter.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter contained in claims 4-6, 8-13, 16, and 18.

PART A. The Examiner has objected to claims 16 and 18.

The Examiner has objected to claims 16 and 18 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, and has noted that claims 16 and 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 16 and 18 have been canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer as to their subject matter.

Accordingly, in view of the foregoing, the objection to claims 16 and 18 is moot and should be withdrawn.

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PART B. The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 14, 15, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Japanese Patent No. 06-241362 (**Hideo '362**) in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,726,104 (**Boitnott '104**).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, for the following reasons.

The Examiner has indicated that claim 16 sets forth allowable subject matter.

At least one feature set forth in claim 16 has been incorporated into claim 1, as amended.

At least one feature set forth in claim 16 has been incorporated into claim 2, as amended. At least one feature set forth in claim 16 has been incorporated into claim 3, as amended.

At least one feature set forth in claim 16 has been incorporated into claim 14, as amended.

Claim 15 depends from one of claims 1 to 3.

Accordingly, in view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection of claims 1, 14, and 15 should be withdrawn.

Claim 17 has been canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer as to its subject matter.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claim 17 is moot and should be withdrawn.

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PART C. The Examiner has rejected claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Japanese Patent No. 06-241362 (**Hideo '362**) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,645,301 (**Kingsford '301**).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, for the following reasons.

The Examiner has indicated that claim 16 sets forth allowable subject matter.

At least one feature set forth in claim 16 has been incorporated into claim 2, as amended.

At least one feature set forth in claim 16 has been incorporated into claim 3, as amended.

Accordingly, in view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection of claims 2 and 3 should be withdrawn.

PART D. The Examiner has objected to the drawings under 37 CFR §1.83(a).

Applicants respectfully traverse this objection to the drawings, for the following reasons.

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The Examiner has objected to the drawings. The Examiner has suggested that some features set forth in claim 3 (lines 5-21) are not currently depicted in any drawings (see Office Action dated April 17, 2008, page 2, line 7 to page 3, line 3).

In particular, the Examiner has suggested that the following combination of features in claim 3 is not shown in any drawings:

each of the joint members is provided in an abutting end face thereof with an annular recessed portion for forming a portion for accommodating the gasket therein when the joint members are butted against each other,

the gasket being in intimate contact with an inner surface of the recessed portion of the first joint member approximately over the entire area thereof when the pipe joint is properly tightened up,

a surface portion of the gasket exposed from the same recessed portion being then in intimate contact with an inner surface of the recessed portion of the second joint member approximately over the entire area thereof,

a portion of the abutting end face of the first joint member positioned radially inwardly of the recessed portion thereof being then in intimate contact with a portion of the abutting end face of the second joint member positioned radially inwardly of the recessed portion thereof approximately over the entire surface areas thereof,

a portion of the abutting end face of the first joint member positioned radially outwardly of the recessed portion thereof being then in intimate contact with a portion of the abutting end face of the second joint member positioned radially outwardly of the recessed portion thereof approximately over the entire surface areas thereof.

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In response to the objection to the drawings, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner please refer to Figure 5 of the subject application.

As shown in Figure 5, each of the joint members (22,23) is provided in an abutting end face thereof (see abutting end faces shown in Figure 5) with an annular recessed portion (27,28) for forming a portion (see gasket accommodating recessed portion 26) for accommodating the gasket (24) therein when the joint members are butted against each other.

Figure 5 shows the gasket (24) being in intimate contact with an inner surface of the recessed portion (27) of the first joint member (22) approximately over the entire area thereof when the pipe joint (21) is properly tightened up.

Figure 5 shows a surface portion of the gasket (24) exposed from the same recessed portion (27) being then in intimate contact with an inner surface of the recessed portion (28) of the second joint member (23) approximately over the entire area thereof.

Figure 5 shows a portion (22d) of the abutting end face of the first joint member (22) positioned radially inwardly of the recessed portion (27) thereof being then in intimate contact with a portion (23d) of the abutting end face of the second joint member (23) positioned radially inwardly of the recessed portion (28) thereof approximately over the entire surface areas thereof.

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Figure 5 shows a portion (22e) of the abutting end face of the first joint member (22) positioned radially outwardly of the recessed portion (27) thereof being then in intimate contact with a portion (23e) of the abutting end face of the second joint member (23) positioned radially outwardly of the recessed portion (28) thereof approximately over the entire surface areas thereof.

Accordingly, in view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that this objection to the drawings should be withdrawn.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due now or in the future with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosure: Amendment Transmittal

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